United Nations A/62/623

General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 December 2007

Original: English

Sixty-second session
Agenda item 65
Report of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 18 December 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Cambodia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

For many years now, Cambodia has been working closely with the United Nations in a number of areas of cooperation, especially with the United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme and others. However, in the area of human rights, Cambodia is deeply upset with the aggressive behaviour of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights in Cambodia, who, during his last visit to Cambodia, has gone beyond the limit that is acceptable.

I wish to recall article 17 of the Paris Peace Agreements of 1991, which states: "... after the end of the transitional period, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights should continue to monitor closely the human rights situation in Cambodia, including, if necessary, by the appointment of a Special Rapporteur ...".

Despite the fact that there is no longer a necessity for such a Special Representative, Cambodia continues to show its goodwill by accepting the Special Representative in order to further, jointly, the work to consolidate human rights in the country and to build closer cooperation with the United Nations.

However, the attitude and arrogance of Mr. Yash Ghai, during his visit to Cambodia from 1 to 10 December 2007 was unacceptable to the dignity of Cambodia as an independent State. During his visit, he insulted the Khmer nation and the royal Government of Cambodia by the following:

- Publicly and through the media, he looked down upon the Kingdom of Cambodia, a sovereign State, as "a country without rule of law". This is tantamount to comparing Cambodia to a primitive and anarchic society.
- More importantly, he incited the people in Cambodia to revolt against a democratically elected government, by stating, inter alia, "Sooner or later, people are going to rise ..., there is a limit to how far you could use coercion as a method of development".

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This provocative action flagrantly contradicts the opinion survey which was conducted by the United States International Republican Institute (IRI) between 20 December 2006 and 20 January 2007, which showed that 71 per cent of Cambodians interviewed believed that "Cambodia is moving in the right direction".

In the face of the repeatedly insulting attitude of Mr. Yash Ghai, the Royal Government of Cambodia is now considering whether the Secretary-General's Special Representative is "still necessary", as stipulated in article 17 of the Paris Peace Agreement, while, since then, Cambodia has been moving smoothly and irreversibly on the path towards respect of human rights, to a much greater extent than many countries in the region where there are no special representatives on human rights.

I would be grateful if you could arrange to have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 65 entitled "Report of the Human Rights Council".

(*Signed*) Kosal **Sea**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the
Kingdom of Cambodia to the United Nations